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The Changing Character of the Christian International La Confédération Internationale des Syndicats Chrétiens : son évolution

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Résumé de l'article

INTRODUCTION

Dans le domaine du syndicalisme international, l'étude de la CISC présente aujourd'hui un intérêt manifeste. Autrefois, partie négligeable devant les autres centrales internationales (telles que la CISL⁽¹⁾ et la FSM⁽²⁾), la CISC attire de plus en plus une attention marquée.

Un intéressant phénomène de transformation de l'intérieur durant la dernière décennie a pu amener une croissance accélérée dans le « membership » et dans les moyens financiers. Les facteurs de ce changement dans le caractère et l'orientation de la CISC sont nombreux. Nommons entre autres : le besoin d'attirer des membres dans les pays sous-développés, le processus de sécularisation, l'esprit d'aggrégation introduit par le Pape Jean XXIII dans l'Eglise catholique et la venue au pouvoir dans la centrale d'un « leadership » ambitieux et énergique.

HISTORIQUE

Les premiers syndicats catholiques et protestants qui ont été formés se présentaient comme une alternative à l'approche anticléricale des organisations socialistes et anarchiques. Ceux qui participaient à la formation de ces premiers syndicats, tout motivés d'abord par l'urgence de répandre la doctrine chrétienne et de réagir à l'influence socialiste, n'entretenaient que de vagues notions au sujet de la réforme du système capitaliste et de la protection des intérêts des travailleurs.

Même si les syndicats chrétiens commentent d'abord une légère expansion, leur importance et leur influence n'en demeuraient pas moins assez marginales. C'était plutôt, selon les mots d'un membre : « une organisation composée d'un petit nombre de faibles éléments et destinée à une vie précaire ».

De 1920 à 1945

La période expérimentale du mouvement des travailleurs chrétiens se termina par la fondation de la CISC en 1920, sans toutefois mettre un terme à ses faiblesses internes et à ses antagonismes. La venue de régimes autoritaires en Italie, Allemagne et Autriche amena de coûteuses pertes dans le « membership » de l'organisation. Malgré ses handicaps (et quelques autres), le mouvement n'en continua pas moins d'exister et d'évoluer.

Pendant la période d'entre-deux guerres, l'organisation était plutôt décrite comme « l'internationale blanche », rattachée à la doctrine chrétienne en tant que base à la société humaine.

De 1945 à 1952

La deuxième guerre mondiale interrompit pratiquement toutes les activités de la CISC pour plusieurs années. La reconstruction du mouvement ouvrier chrétien dans le pays ou le fascisme et le nazisme l'avaient détruit fut la tâche première de la confédération pendant plusieurs années. Ses efforts ne rencontrèrent que peu de succès. L'expansion des fédérations nationales existantes s'avéra toutefois plus profitable. La reconstruction de la CISC prit donc place dans le même milieu européen (France et Belgique) qui la caractérisait avant la guerre.

Le point tournant

Après le départ de Serrarens en 1952, qui fut secrétaire général pendant 32 ans, l'organisation connut une profonde transformation pour prendre l'allure d'un mouvement vraiment international non confessionnel et susceptible d'attirer les pays sous-développés par des slogans révolutionnaires et socialistes. En 1955, lors du XII^e congrès, même si les éléments européens continuèrent de miner, on pouvait raisonnablement escompter que la voie des autres continents deviendrait de plus en plus forte dans le futur. Finalement, l'élection de Vanistendael et de ses associés signifia la montée au pouvoir d'une nouvelle génération moins identifiée avec les luttes chrétiennes contre le socialisme, plus susceptible d'accepter quelques-uns des postulats du socialisme et définitivement imprégnée d'une vision universelle de ses fonctions. On comprend assez facilement que ce facteur combiné au processus de sécularisation, à la montée des pays sous-développés et à la modernisation de l'Eglise catholique puisse mener à la naissance d'un nouvel esprit et d'une nouvelle approche.

SITUATION ACTUELLE

Les congrès, autorité suprême de la CISC en matière d'élaboration des politiques, se tiennent au moins une fois à tous les trois ans et sont composés des fédérations nationales et des syndicats internationaux. Second dans la hiérarchie, le conseil général peut ressembler à un congrès en miniature dans lequel le nombre des représentants est réduit pendant que le nombre des rencontres est augmenté. A son tour, le bureau est peut-être le plus important organisme de la CISC puisqu'il s'occupe des questions quotidiennes et qu'il est autorisé, de par la constitution, à traiter de tout sujet non spécifiquement assigné à d'autres organismes. Les organisations régionales et les comités sont des organismes à compétence limitée.

Au point de vue « membership », la CISC dit représenter environ 12 millions de travailleurs (membres en règle et sympathisants). Quant au nombre de membres en règle, un tableau statistique, publié en 1963 par le Ministère du Travail Américain, estimait le « membership » de la CISC à 3,6 millions.

Il est assez difficile d'analyser les aspects financiers de l'organisation. On sait cependant qu'il existe d'abord un fond de solidarité constitué des contributions des pays industrialisés, sur une base d'un franc belge par tête. Il y a en plus, évidemment, le fond général correspondant au budget ordinaire de l'institution et composé des contributions des organisations affiliées. Si durant ces 47 années d'existence, la CISC n'a eu que deux secrétaires généraux et 7 présidents, c'est qu'elle n'a pas échappé aux caractéristiques et aux problèmes qui sont habituellement le lot de semblables organisations. Le phénomène a même pu être accentué dans son cas à cause des sources limitées de recrutement disponible.

Cependant les dirigeants de la CISC ont su prouver qu'il représentait plus qu'une simple bureaucratie internationale. Vanistendael et ses associés ont élargi les horizons de l'organisation de telle façon qu'on peut maintenant élaborer sur les nombreux signes de transformations qui se sont produites.

SIGNES DE CHANGEMENT

L'universalisation

Le XVI^e congrès tenu à Liège en 1964 donna l'impression nette d'une certaine tendance vers l'universalisation et vers l'abandon de la tradition européenne. Les premiers signes de cette tendance à s'étendre dans tous les pays du monde furent notés dans les années 50. Il existe deux raisons fondamentales à l'idée d'universalisation de la CISC :

1.—Étant une organisation ouvrière de bonne foi, elle doit tendre à l'universalisation à cause de l'idée internationale du travail.

2.—Aussi, vu son inspiration catholique elle doit respecter le caractère d'universalité de cette Eglise.

La sécularisation

La CISC qui fut d'abord confessionnelle puis ensuite devenue inter-confessionnelle finit par adopter une approche non-confessionnelle.

Le schisme français

Dès son apparition en 1920, la CISC a été divisée en deux groupes opposés : une aile droite formée par les collets blancs et les employés civils ; en second lieu, on nota une espèce d'aile gauche formée par les travailleurs industriels surtout ceux du textile et de la métallurgie. Ces derniers formèrent une minorité à l'intérieur de la CISC, minorité qui avec les années finit par devenir la majorité accablant ainsi la bataille interne contre le caractère confessionnel du mouvement. Ceci amena en 1963, l'élimination du mot « chrétien » et l'introduction de changements fondamentaux au caractère de la confédération.

Relation avec les autres mouvements internationaux

On note plusieurs facteurs qui ont influencé l'attitude de la CISC face à ses rivaux. Des différences idéologiques, la volonté de garder son identité, la conscience de sa petitesse et une histoire de frustrations ont contribué à établir et à conditionner les politiques de la CISC face à la CISL et la FSM. Historiquement, il y a toujours eu, et ce depuis 1945 une rivalité entre la CISC et les autres organisations internationales : cette rivalité tend cependant à s'atténuer depuis quelques années.

Les socialistes chrétiens

L'évolution des esprits permit à la CISC de considérer comme utiles certains moyens comme la grève et la nationalisation autrefois qualifiées de moyens contraires au principe chrétien.

L'Eglise catholique et l'esprit de modernisation

L'évolution de la pensée de l'Eglise catholique est notable : Les encycliques de 1832 à 1891 condamnaient les innovations et le socialisme ; Les encycliques Mater et Magistra et Pacem in Terris qui eurent la tendance de transformer l'Eglise en un moyen de modernisation prénaient le développement.

CONCLUSION

On ne peut pas douter de la transformation profonde qui s'est opérée au sein de la CISC. Elle a non seulement cessé d'être exclusivement européenne mais elle est devenue l'image d'un syndicalisme laïque et révolutionnaire. Ces changements prennent racine dans l'évolution de l'Eglise catholique et aussi, dans une moins grande mesure dans le courant libéral de la foi protestante. Quoique d'origine respectable, ces changements drastiques impliquent des risques sérieux :

1.—La tendance vers l'universalisation a sûrement élargi les horizons de la CISC mais elle a pris place aux dépens de la conception orthodoxe de ce que signifie le syndicalisme international.

2.—En abandonnant les principes sociaux chrétiens, la CISC ouvre sans contrôle ses portes aux masses non-chrétiennes d'Afrique et d'Asie, mais peut créer le théâtre d'une crise à l'intérieur des organisations européennes qui ont jusqu'à maintenant la base solide de la CISC.

3.—L'abandon de la doctrine chrétienne peut fortifier les activités externes du mouvement en courte période, mais les effets de longue période sont à craindre.

(1) CISL, Confédération Internationale des Syndicats Libres.

(2) FSM, Fédération Syndicale Mondiale.

The Changing Character of the Christian International

Efren Cordova

It can hardly be doubted that the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions has undergone a profound transformation. Not only has it ceased to be an exclusively European movement, but it is rapidly growing secular and also becoming a radical or revolutionary type of trade unionism.

Perhaps no other question concerning the field of international trade unionism presents greater interest today than the study of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (CISC).¹ Largely overshadowed in the past by the two major international federations — the communist-dominated WFTU and the Western-sponsored ICFTU — the Christian international seemed to be doomed to play a secondary, gray and inconspicuous role. The fact that it was recognized as the oldest existing labor international made no difference in the eyes of its competitors who disdainfully called it « the midget organization » and « the faithful servant of the Vatican ». Even in the academic world the study of CISC has been consistently neglected, particularly in the U.S. and England where no significant confessional trade unions have ever existed.²

Yet despite those signs of inferiority CISC has recently begun to get a larger share of the spotlights. To some extent this rise to prominence is due to a relatively important

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(1) To avoid confusion between the English initials (IFCTU) and the initials of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) we shall use the French initials CISC.

(2) In the United States the only example of this type of trade unionism is the diminutive Christian Labor Association founded in 1931 under the guidance of the Christian Reformed Church. The Association of Catholic Trade Unionists formed six years later in New York is not really a labor organization. For an account of the former, see BOB REPAS, « The History of the Christian Labor Association », *Labor History*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (Spring 1964), pp. 168-182.

growth in membership and financial resources. For the most part, however, it is the result of greater audacity and radicalism on the part of the erstwhile grave and moderate organization. Both events are in turn the result of an interesting phenomenon of transformation that the Christian International has been undergoing during the last decade. The combined effect of the need to attract membership in the underdeveloped countries, of the secularization process especially intensive in some European countries, of the spirit of « *aggiornamento* » introduced by Pope John XXIII in the Catholic Church and of the coming to power in the federation of an ambitious and energetic leadership, is undoubtedly changing the character and orientation of CISC. To be sure the old federation continues to be dwarfed by the other two internationals but it is expanding the limits of its constituency, it is gradually losing the old conservative image and it is certainly no longer the servant of the Church.

This article aims to present some evidence that significant changes are occurring in the life of this international trade union organization, to explore the reasons behind it and to ponder some of its implications. But before considering those specific subjects, it is necessary to discuss briefly the historical background and the current picture of the Christian international trade unionism.

Background

A PRECARIOUS LIFE (1908-1920)

In 1908 when an International Secretariat of Christian trade unions was established in Zurich the Christian national organizations were still struggling for a viable existence in some of its would-be affiliates and in others were little more than hopeful plans in the minds of some Christian leaders. The first Catholic and Protestant trade unions had begun to appear during the last quarter of the 19th century³ primarily as an alternative to the anti-clerical approach of the socialist and anarchist organizations. As a matter of fact the oldest Christian organization that could be equated to a trade union was the Ghent Anti-Socialist League founded in Belgium in 1878.⁴ Those who participated in the

(3) Catholic Circles of Artisans existed, however, since 1845 when the German priest Adolphe Kolpin founded several of them in Elberfeld and Cologne. See LUISA RIVA SANSEVERINO, *Il Movimento sindacale cristiano* (Roma : Cesare Zuffi Editore, 1950), pp. 17-18.

(4) MICHAEL FOGARTY, *Christian Democracy in Western Europe* (Notre Dame, Ind. : University of Notre Dame Press, 1957), p. 187.

formation of this and other Christian trade unions entertained some vague notions about the reform of the capitalist system and the protection of the workers' interest, but they were primarily motivated by the urge to spread the Christian doctrine and to counteract the socialist influence.

Christian labor unions gradually gained a foothold in half a dozen European countries⁵ though in terms of membership they continued to be rather weak both at the national and at the international level. Intra-national weaknesses stemmed from two basic factors: First, Christian labor leaders were preaching industrial harmony and even forming mixed corporations at a time when the mood of the working class was running precisely in the opposite direction; second, the Church hierarchy was trying to influence the proletariat at a period when it stood accused of being the bulwark of the rich and propertied classes.

At the international level the secretariat was not only premature⁶ but was also plagued by some internal discrepancies and doubts. While some national movements under the influence of Germany favored an interdenominational approach, others like the Dutch and Swiss federations, preferred dual Catholic and Protestant Christian organizations. Furthermore, the Germans' preference for a centralized international clashed with the French reluctance to surrender national autonomy.

Centralization was obviously out of the question due to the weight still attached to national interests, but German trade unions being the best organized and most prestigious, the interdenominational approach was the one that prevailed. Headquarters were located at Cologne and a German was elected secretary general. However, the life of the Secretariat was, as expected, a very limited one. To quote a long-time leader of the Christian international: « an organization composed of a small number of weak elements was destined to lead a precarious life. »⁷ Total membership never exceeded the half million mark and the Secretariat performed few of the functions that ordinarily fall within the competence of this type of organization. Two important characteristics were, however, discernible in this initial stage: First, whether denomi-

(5) Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland.

(6) The first national federations had begun to appear in 1907, precisely a year before the founding of the Secretariat.

(7) JULES ZIRNHELD, *Cinquante années de syndicalisme chrétien*, (Paris : Edition Spes, 1937), p. 104.

national or interdenominational the embryonic federation was definitely going to be Christian; second, whether centralized or decentralized the movement was to be an antisocialist one.

CISC BETWEEN THE WARS (1920-1945)

The founding of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions in 1920 concluded the experimental period of the Christian workers' movement but it did not signify the end of its internal weaknesses and antagonisms. At first the lingering effects of the First World War led to the same type of stormy discussion between « allied » and « central powers » which at this very time were afflicting the IFTU. In part to avoid friction between the two most powerful constituents, headquarters were located in Utrecht, Holland, and a Dutch school teacher who had been active in tangential trade union activities, P. J. S. Serrarens, was elected Secretary General.

Subsequently, the Christian international suffered the costly disappearance of the Italian, German and Austrian trade union movements; the Depression and further fascist persecutions in Spain, Portugal and Hungary contributed to decimate its membership and to deplete the financial resources of the organization. Indeed CISC suffered more heavily than any other international from the wave of totalitarianism that swept Europe for more than two decades.⁸ Some of its most powerful components were precisely those of the countries which one after another fell under authoritarian regimes. As for the remaining national centers there is no doubt that they were still typical cases of « syndicalismes de minorité. »⁹ Thus CISC continued to be weak either because the national federations were nonexistent, had disappeared or were rather feeble.

Notwithstanding those handicaps, Utrecht was fiercely determined to maintain the international apparatus and as Lewis Lorwin points out it even succeeded in obtaining a recognized place for Christian trade unionism in Europe.¹⁰ CISC won before the International Court of Justice the right of Christian trade unions to be taken into account in

(8) Membership declined from an estimated 3.4 million in 1920 to less than 1.8 million in 1938.

(9) GEORGES LEFRANC, *Les expériences syndicales internationales* (Paris : Editions Montaigne, 1952), p. 42.

10 LEWIS LORWIN, *The International Labor Movement* (New York : Harper and Brother, 1953), p. 159.

the appointment of workers' delegates to the ILO and it also managed to hold six ordinary congresses in which the usual array of resolutions dealing with the eight hour work day, unemployment, migration, employment of women and children and freedom of association were adopted. The tone of those resolutions was clearly reformist, the scope European and the targets obviously modest. But the main features of the long run orientation of CISC were still very much alive.

When, in 1937, the U.S.S.R. decided to join the ILO after her admission to the League of Nations, Serrarens was the only member of the Governing Body who took a stand against the admission of a Soviet workers delegate claiming that the tripartite principles should be upheld in regard to the workers' delegate as well as in regard to the employers' delegate.¹¹ However, condemnation of socialism was not confined to the Bolshevik Revolution. Indeed, the Innsbruck Program adopted in 1922 assailed the errors of socialism as well as those of communism without making any differentiation between them. The same program, on the other hand, made no attempt to hide its belief that the whole economic and social organization should rest on the principles of Christian morality. True, the papal encyclicals were not specifically mentioned out of deference to the affiliated Protestant trade unions; but charity, along with justice were regarded as the guiding principles of the social order, private property was specifically recognized (in accordance with the tenets of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*) and the ideal of « spiritual perfection » in addition to material welfare, represented the ultimate goals to be pursued by the confederation. Finally — and most important — concerning requirements for affiliation, the organization was described as made up of national trade union which explicitly espoused Christian doctrine as the basis for human society.¹² Small wonder that as a reflection of the « virtuosness » of its program and as a graphic contrast with the Red, Pink and Black Internationals, CISC was promptly dubbed « the White International. »¹³

(11) « It has been pointed out that there were no employers in the U.S.S.R. but no one had suggested that there were no workers », said Serrarens at the 78th meeting of the Governing Body. See *Industrial and Labor Information*, Vol. LXII, No. 9, (May 31), 1937, p. 341.

(12) The Declaration of Principles and the Program can be seen in JOSEPH ARENDT, *La nature, l'organisation et le programme des syndicats ouvriers chrétiens* (Paris : Action Populaire, 1926), pp. 103-107.

(13) See RIVA SANSEVERINO, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

RECONSTRUCTION UNDER THE OLD SPIRIT (1945-1952)

World War II practically suspended all CISC activities for several years but the spirit of Christian trade unionism once again survived this time of trial. Shortly after the end of the hostilities the eighth Congress held at Brussels proceeded to reconstitute the federation. Only 47 delegates from four countries (France, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland) were at hand to plan the work ahead; nevertheless, they pledged to fortify and expand the Christian International « now more necessary than ever because of the confusion provoked by the WFTU slogan of trade union unity. »¹⁴

The immediate and most important task of the confederation seemed to be the reconstruction of the Christian labor movement in those countries where Fascism and Nazism had destroyed it. For several years the Executive Committee devoted its best efforts to promote the reappearance of separate Christian trade union movements in Germany, Italy and Austria. Those efforts proved to be utterly unsuccessful, chiefly because they conflicted with other plans sponsored by more influential groups and with the mood of unity of post-war Europe. In Germany, the DGB embraced the Christians in a unified organization which proved to be strong enough to resist further attempts to take the confessional trade unions away from it. Italian-Christian workers also became part of a unified confederation and when later on a split did take place the dissident Christian wing (CISL) decided to affiliate to ICFTU instead of CISC. Finally, the Austrian Christian trade unionists succeeded only in being regarded as a recognized « fraction » within an all-encompassing confederation.

Much more fruitful were the efforts directed toward the expansion of the surviving national federations. By 1949 when the Tenth Congress convened at Lyons three million affiliates were again represented, nearly half of them belonging to the French CFTC and the Belgium CSC¹⁵ which henceforth loomed as the new great powers within the confederation. In keeping with the shifts in the internal composition by 1952 the headquarters were transferred to Brussels; moreover all the three

(14) CISC, *Rapport Moral du Secrétaire Général, Congrès Extraordinaire Bruxelles, octobre 1945* (Courtray, 1945), p. 29.

(15) FAITH WILLIAMS, « Christian International Trade Union Congress », 1949, *Monthly Labor Review*, Vol. 69, No. 6 (December 1949), pp. 672-673.

presidents and the secretary general elected after the war have come from these two countries.

The reconstruction of CISC had thus taken place within the same European milieu that characterized the pre-war federation. It is true that the General Council had approved in 1951 the admission of five Latin American countries and of the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions of Viet-Nam, but these organizations were indeed so weak that they could not afford to send delegates to the next congress. Furthermore, this reconstruction had not caused the organization to deviate one bit from the old spirit of Innsbruck.¹⁶ At the Lyons Congress (1949) the resolution concerning the personality of the worker based its reasoning « on the principles which constitute the foundations of our Christian civilization. »¹⁷ Likewise the keynote resolution on code-termination approved by the Amsterdam Congress while demanding « a profound transformation of modern enterprise » actually presupposed the recognition of private property and conformed to the Christian notion of industrial harmony. Neither congress passed any resolution or discussed any topic which could by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as unbecoming the history of moderation of CISC. Top prelates of the Catholic Church and Protestant pastors found, therefore, no obstacle in attending the various meetings of CISC and in addressing its membership with the same mild and reformist accent that constituted the trademark of the confederation.

THE TURNING POINT: 1952

When Serrarens retired in 1952 after thirty two years as Secretary General, he stated confidently in his farewell address: « May our vessel remain faithful to its past course. May the name of Christ continue to be recorded in each and every page of its log book. »¹⁸ Certainly he was far from suspecting that within the next fourteen years the Christian international was going to experience a profound transformation whereby the European, reformist and Christian organization turned to become a nondenominational international which now appeals to underdeveloped countries through revolutionary and socialistic slogans.

(16) A revision of the Constitution was approved in 1946 but it was essentially a procedural one.

(17) CLSC, *La CISC de Amsterdam à Lyon, 1946-1949* (Utretch, 1949), p. 368.

(18) P.J.S. SERRARENS, « Préface de l'ancien Secrétaire Général » in CISC, *Le droit de cogestion*, p. 1.

It is always possible to argue that the change in the goals of the Christian movement had been anticipated in the preceding period. The Essen principles formulated by the German Christian trade unions in 1933, the « New Community » campaign launched by the Dutch Catholic workers in 1938 and the CFTC Plan for the future of the French economy published two years earlier, could be deemed as early attempts to bridge the gap between Christianity and Social Democracy.¹⁹ Yet there is no doubt that they were really sporadic and doubtful examples which furthermore had little importance or success at the time. A continued campaign aimed at affecting the essence of the Christian international has indeed taken place only after the inception of the new leadership in 1952.

Probably because it was a basic departure from the past, such a campaign has proceeded in a gradual and subtle manner. Still in 1955, on the occasion of the Twelfth Congress, the European element continued to predominate in the organization although there were some expectations that the voice of other continents would grow stronger in the future. Even more delayed were the changes in the official doctrine: it was not until the Fifteenth Congress held in 1964 that a new Program and Declaration of Principles were adopted. As to the transfer of leadership there is little doubt that at the time of its occurrence it hardly indicated any substantial departure from the tradition. Auguste Vanistendael, the new Secretary General, had served for five years as assistant secretary under Serrarens and was generally considered as his disciple and collaborator. Yet there were some important differences between the two leaders which were likely to make this transfer of power the starting point of a series of changes.

First, their whole vision of the task ahead differed substantially as a result of the fact that while Serrarens was more Catholic than trade unionist, Vanistendael is probably more union leader than militant Catholic. Secondly, their very personalities presented a sharp contrast. Serrarens was a quiet intellectual and an ascetic man with a penchant for juridical debates. Vanistendael, on the contrary, is an ambitious leader more intent on getting things going than in preserving a tradition or obtaining a legal right. Finally, the election of Vanistendael and his associates signified the rise to power of a new generation less identified with the Christian-socialist struggles, more amenable to accept

(19) FOGARTY, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-218.

some of the postulates of socialism and definitely possessed of a world view of its function.

In a small international the impact of a secretary general may be a consequential one, particularly if he is acting on the strength of other concurring factors. When those factors are as relevant as the secularization process, the « great ascent » of the underdeveloped nations, and the modernization of the Catholic Church, then the whole effect may lead to the birth of a new spirit and a new approach.

It is against this background that we shall proceed now to describe the current picture of CISC in terms of its external aspects and to analyze the signs of change in orientation and spirit.

Current Situation

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure of CISC follows the general pattern of other international organizations. A total of seven different entities make up the entire organization, although only four possess a global or comprehensive authority. At the top of the organization there is the congress, which according to the constitution is the supreme policy making authority of CISC. The congress meets at least once every three years and is composed of representatives of the national federations and of the trade internationals. Voting rights are recognized for both types of organization in regressive proportion to the number of members. Up to now there have been fifteen congresses the majority of which have been held in small Western European cities.

Next in the hierarchy is the General Council which also consists of representatives of the affiliated national confederations and of the trade internationals. As it has been said of the WFTU's council this one seems to be also a « miniature congress »²⁰ in which the number of representatives is reduced and the number of meetings is augmented. In effect, limited **only** by the general policies of the Congress, the General Council is authorized to deal with all questions affecting the confederation in addition to the specific duties of fixing the budget and

(20) JOHN P. WINDMULLER, *American Labor and the International Labor Movement, 1940 to 1953* (Ithaca, N.Y. : The Institute of International, Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, 1954), p. 63.

supervising the work of the Bureau. The Bureau, in turn, is perhaps the most important effective organ of CISC since it is in charge of directing the day to day activities of the federation and according to the constitution may deal with any matter not specifically assigned to other organs. At present the Bureau is composed of 18 members and 12 deputy members elected by the congress for a period of three years upon nomination by the national federations and the trade internationals. Lastly, there is the Secretariat headed by the Secretary General who acts as secretary of the Congress, the General Council and the Bureau and represents the CISC « in every circumstance. » ²¹

The regional organizations and the committees are organs of limited competence. The former confine their function to a specific region or continent and are regarded as an integral part of the organization, irrespective of the degree of autonomy that they manage to enjoy. A national confederation, for instance, can become a member of a regional organization only after being affiliated with CISC. Currently there are four regional organizations: the European Organization with headquarters also in Brussels, the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists (BATU) located in Manila, the Pan African Workers Congress (PAWC) new transferred to Leopoldville and the Latin American Federation of Christian Trade Unionists (CLASC) with headquarters in Caracas. The last one has shown considerable vitality both in the organizing of seminars and training courses, in the distribution of its publications and in the promotion of new national centers. The European Organization concentrates on representational task and the other two regionals perform some service and missionary functions, ²² perhaps just enough to escape the connotation of « paper organizations. » As to the ten permanent committees, suffice it to say that they function as consultative agencies of the Bureau and the Secretariat providing advice on specific affairs such as migration, social security, productivity, employment of women, and relations with UNESCO, the Common Market and other inter-governmental organizations.

Finally, trade internationals are situated in a somewhat peculiar position. On the one hand they are not strictly speaking independent

(21) Section 33 of the Constitution of CISC. The Secretary General is currently assisted by a staff of 28 paid employees.

(22) We shall use throughout the article the terminology proposed by JOHN WINDMULLER, « International Trade Union Organizations : Structure, Functions and Limitations » (to be published by Harper & Row in the 1967 special volume of the Industrial Relations Research Association).

of CISC since, as we have seen, they are actually one of the two constituent parts of the federation. Moreover, those internationals are constitutionally required to conform to the program and bylaws of the federation and cannot admit as members trade unions not affiliated with CISC unless specifically authorized by the Council.²³ On the other hand, they are by no means departments of the central body since their right to handle autonomously the industrial problems of their trade is repeatedly spelled out in the constitution. Whatever their legal status may be, there is every indication that the real condition is less complicated: the existing eleven trade internationals cover in effect only a small number of European countries and it is only through a recently created International Secretariat Service that they can get much of the clerical and material assistance necessary to operate.²⁴

What is the real strength of the labor movement represented by this impressive apparatus? CISC does not publish any figure concerning either membership or finances. However, judging by a reference to the total number of affiliates made in 1963 by one of the spokesmen of the international²⁵ and by the estimate provided in 1965 by its Latin American regional,²⁶ it is fair to assume that the CISC claims to represent at present about twelve million workers. In striking contrast with that figure the U. S. Department of Labor fixed in 1963 the total number of members as approximately 3.6 million.²⁷ This discrepancy stands in our view for something more than a contrast between an inflated and a conservative estimate. While the U. S. Department of Labor is speaking of members who are duly registered and regularly pay their dues, CISC is more likely talking about « followers » or « sympathizers, » i.e., people whom they consider more or less loyal to its cause and which either vote for the Christians in union elections or attend their rallies or participate in their campaigns. Yet even with respect to the first meaning there seems to be different ways of counting actual membership for the figures of « subscribing members » occasionally given by CISC regarding a particular country, substantially exceed the estimate of the

(23) See section 6 of the Constitution.

(24) See CISC, *Le plein emploi; XII Congress* (Antwerp, 1955), pp. 220-223.

(25) Speech by Jean Bruck, representative of CISC before the 32nd Congress of the CFTC, *Labor*, No. 4, 1963, p. 155.

(26) EMILIO MAFFPERO, « Latin America's Labor Movement of Christian Democratic Orientation as an Instrument of Social Change », in W.V. D'Antonio and F. Pike, *Religion, Revolution and Reform* (New York, Praeger, 1964), p. 189.

(27) U.S. Department of Labor, *Directory of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (CISC)*, (Washington : GPO, 1963), p. 7.

U. S. Department of Labor.²⁸ These differences probably explain the somewhat compromising figure of 4.7 million members accredited to CISC by the Yearbook of International Organization.²⁹

A glance at the geographic distribution of that controversial membership reveals a significant predominance of French speaking countries, or, to put it in a different manner, of France and Belgium and their former colonies. The two mother countries account, in effect, for nearly 1.5 million members while in Asia, South Viet-Nam represents the largest affiliate with 300,000 members, in Africa the Union of Congolese Workers and the Malagasy Christian Federation supply nearly two thirds of the total membership of that continent and in the Western Hemisphere the former Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labor (whose stronghold is the province of Quebec) and the Martinique Labor Confederation with a membership of 81,000 rank at the top of the list. It should be noted, however, that alongside those mainstays of conventional membership there is an increasing mass of followers and semi-trade unionists scattered about the world. We shall come back to this point later.

A similar veil of uncertainty seems to shroud the financial aspect of the organization. It is known that since 1958 CISC decided to follow the example of ICFTU and established a Solidarity Fund to promote organizational activities in developing countries. At first this fund was supposed to be raised through contributions of the advanced countries on a basis of one Belgian franc per capita. However, subsequent developments in its administration and in the size of the grants given to the regional organizations suggest that additional sources have been nourishing the fund. Alongside this Solidarity Fund there exists, of course, the General Fund corresponding to the ordinary budget of the institution and made up of regressive contributions from the affiliated organizations. It is precisely because of the scant information available on this matter in the proceedings of CISC that speculations about huge donations coming from outside the organization have been circulating recently. In point of fact it is not possible to check the accuracy of such rumors; regarding the international itself it seems safer to think

(28) This happens, for instance, with respect to Congo-Leopoldville where the corresponding figures are 127,897 and 92,500. In France the CFTC has outnumbered Force Ouvrier in several trade union elections despite having fewer registered members.

(29) *Yearbook of International Organizations, 1964-1965* (Brussels: Union of International Associations, 1965), p. 363.

that it is primarily through the contribution of the Belgian and Dutch trade unions that CISC is able to finance most of its present activities.

Little use could be made, however, of those financial assets without corresponding human resources. At the level of the higher hierarchy CISC has not been an exception to the characteristics and problems that are usually found in the other internationals. Long tenures in office are, of course, typical of this kind of organization where the qualifications for the top positions are difficult to meet and where the advantages of the incumbent in terms of connections and good will are even more difficult to surpass. During its forty-seven years of existence, CISC has elected only two secretary generals and seven presidents, two of the latter having been appointed because of the death in office of their predecessors. A similar degree of continuation in office is noticeable within the other elective positions, a phenomenon probably accentuated in the case of CISC by the limited sources of recruitment available. It is plain, however, that such a disadvantage is in part offset by the greater confidence that elective officers are able to enjoy when elected by a more homogeneous and manageable organization. While the Secretary General of the ICFTU is frequently paralyzed by the rivalries between the major blocs vying for control of the organization, Serrarens and Vanistendael have — within the limits of their accountability to superior organs — enjoyed a substantially greater leeway.

Experience is another asset that accrues from long tenure, particularly concerning the discharging of the representational functions. Since 1946 CISC succeeded in securing consultative status before the United Nations, the ILO, the FAO, the UNESCO, the ICEM, the Council of Europe and other intergovernmental organizations. To a certain extent this representational task boils down to routine and ceremonial contacts though occasionally it has provided CISC with the opportunity of raising its voice on behalf of the captive labor movements or to contribute to some important undertakings, like the drafting of the Declaration of Human Rights or to submit useful memoranda with respect to delicate questions like the principle of equal pay for equal work.³⁰

Yet CISC leadership is not an ordinary international bureaucracy. Driven by an inner compulsion of gaining recognition and status beyond

(30) See International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, *Equal Pay for Equal Work; A Memorandum on the Principle of Women's Work and Women's Wages* (Courtray, Belgium, n.d.).

the representational task, Vanistendael and his associates engaged from the outset in organizational and missionary work aimed at expanding the horizons of the Christian International. It is to this first sign of change — the march toward universalization — which actually heralded the other changes, that we turn now.

Signs of Change

UNIVERSALIZATION

In 1952 when the Eleventh Congress convened at The Hague, the Christian International consisted only of 20 national organizations, 12 of which were European, 6 Latin American, 1 North American and 1 Asian. Note should be taken of the fact that three of the European organizations represented trade unions in exile and that none of the Latin American national federations sent delegates or observers to the congress.³¹ Twelve years later, in 1964, when the Fifteenth Congress was held at Liege, 350 delegates were present, coming from 62 nations — 23 Latin American, 20 African, 13 European and 6 Asian.³² This diversified attendance highlighted the trend toward universalization and departure from the European tradition characteristic of present-day CISC. True, some of the non-European organizations were still rather weak and had a tendency to mix social and political activities with economic endeavours, but whether genuine trade union or political action groups, they certainly represented a spirited movement which in some areas was making inroads in the jurisdiction of the other two internationals.

Words and actions regarding the expansion of CISC beyond the European scene date back to 1950 when a committee for the study of labor problems in non-metropolitan areas was created by the Bureau.³³ Two years later the Eleventh Congress passed a resolution concerning the intensification of the efforts directed toward « the extension of the Christian labor movement to all the continents; »³⁴ a similar appeal was made in the next congress and this time it was complemented with

(31) CISC, *Le droit de cogestion*, p. 28. However dismaying this picture may appear let us remember that the preceding congress was attended solely by seven countries including the Christian « fraction » of the Austrian Trade Union Federation. See WILLIAMS, *op. cit.*, p. 673.

(32) « For a Freer and More Just World », *Labor*, Nos. 4-5, 1964, p. 106.

(33) CISC, *Le droit de cogestion*, p. 257.

(34) *Ibid.*, pp. 352-353.

specific actions at the level of the Council and the Bureau.³⁵ However, it was not until the Antwerp Congress (1958) that concrete economic assistance was accorded to follow trade unionists of under-developed countries.³⁶ By this time the first regional organization was already established and the new projection of CISC was beginning to gain momentum as the Saigon Encounter between East and West may attest.³⁷ In subsequent years almost all the propaganda and organizational funds found their way to non-European countries.³⁸ One needs only glance at *Labor* the official journal of the federation to realize how its propaganda is now primarily addressed to the underdeveloped nations.

It is true that prior to those actions the Christian labor movement had shown some earnest — albeit diffuse — concern for the universalization of its principles. Indeed, if the tendency toward universalization is imbedded in the philosophy of all trade union movements, the Christian labor organization is doubly attracted to internationalism: as a bona fide labor movement it is naturally drawn to it by the idea of the international solidarity of labor; as a Catholic inspired trend it is driven beyond the nation-states by the concept of the universality of the Catholic Church. The notion of universal brotherhood goes back to the historical inception of Christianity and conforms to the sense of universalism implicit in the word Catholic and to the theological conception of the Church as the mystical body of Christ.

Yet it was precisely here that the Christian international labor movement entangled itself in a sort of self-defeating paradox. As part of the larger spiritual community of the Catholic Church, Christian trade unionism was at the same time propelled toward universalism and inexorably limited in scope to the previous existence of a mass of Catholic workers. To be sure European Protestants, Molslems of North Africa and Buddhists of Viet-Nam had been willing to join CISC before 1958 but they represented an insignificant minority within a minority.³⁹

(35) CISC, *Le plein emploi*, p. 385.

(36) CISC, *Le mouvement syndical chrétien dans le monde, XIIIe Congress* (Vevey, 1958), pp. 428-431.

(37) CISC, *Rencontre Orient-Occident, Saigon, janvier 1958* (Brussels, 1959). See also CISC, *Notre avenir est dans l'espace* (Courtray, Belgique, 1960).

(38) According to a statement made by the Secretary general in the Fifteenth

(38) According to a statement made by the Secretary eneral in the Fifteenth Congress, 90% of the revenues of CISC go to the young organizations of Africa, Asia and Latin America (*Labor*, Nos. 4-5, 1964, p. 123).

(39) Protestants represent approximately ten percent of CISC membership. See GEORGE LICHTBLAU, « The International Christian Labor Movement », *Intelligence Report*, No. 6103 (Washington, 1953), p. 8.

Hence, if the Christian International really wanted to expand and prosper, if the organization was to bid for something more than mere survival, then it was necessary to increase the basis of potential membership. Until 1952 CISC had kept its doors closed to non-Christians or simply left them ajar; under the new leadership it evidently decided to keep them wide open. « We can no longer wait until the non-Christians have embraced Christianity, » Vanistendael explicitly announced in an editorial of *Labor*.⁴⁰

Now, in order to draw to CISC the masses of non-Christian workers from all the continents something had to be done with respect to the word Christian in the title and with the Christian doctrine that hitherto had identified the movement. For the continued use of both was liable to irritate non-Christian members and to deter would-be members. To quote again the Secretary General of CISC « the qualifications of Christian risks giving rise to resistance which may hamper the expansion of the movement. »⁴¹ It was in the light of those considerations that the drive toward universalization of the Christian International has paradoxically brought about the dechristianization and secularization of CISC.

SECULARIZATION

The movement that started as denominational and shortly switched to the interdenominational approach is ending as a nondenominational one. The latter phase of that evolution involved first of all the gradual elimination and de-emphasizing of the outward signs of Christianity together with a broadening of the outer limits of the organization. Some evidences of that transformation can be easily perceived in the course of the last decade. One of the official publications of the organization changed its name from *Christ-labor* to *Labor* and the practice of opening and closing the sessions of the congress with a prayer recited by a priest was discontinued. Moreover, at the organizational level a significant change in the title and orientation of the unions recently founded in Asia and Africa has taken place. Trade unions of « believing workers » — locals as well as nationals — like the Believing Workers Confederation of Togoland, are replacing the old Christian associations; in some countries outright *neutral* organizations like the

(40) *Labor*, No. 30, December 1962, p. 3.

(41) *Labor*, Nos. 4-5, 1964, p. 102.

Confederation of Free Trade Unions of India are now fostered in lieu of broad multiconfessional entities. Events such as those related are unequivocal symptoms of the current orientation.

However, we must look to the philosophy of CISC, as expounded in its Declaration of Principle and Program, for an official corroboration of that trend. The original Program of the federation contained several references to God and to the moral principles of Christianity.⁴² Now the Declaration of Principles of CISC adopted in 1964 makes only one slight reference to the social principles of Christianity and another to the Supreme Being. As to the program adopted the same year, the absence of reference to Christianity or any other religions, is absolute throughout its 35 sections.⁴³ As an editorial of *Labor* put it: « The Declaration of Principles adopted in the Fifteenth Congress reduced the doctrinal references to a minimum. CISC supports the social principles of Christianity. That is all... The fact that CISC has included the term Christian in its name does not imply that it is a denominational organization. » Furthermore, it is interesting to note that according to Vanistendael that evolution has not reached its conclusion. It seems, in effect, that a change in the name of the Latin American regional is in the offing, to wit: *Labor* has hinted in more than one occasion that the use of the word Christian evokes in some Latin American countries association « with the reactionary circles of the Catholic Church responsible for the entrenchment of the oligarchy. »⁴⁴

It is indeed fascinating to observe how this process of dechristianization of the International has been paralleled by a similar process in the national labor movement of some of the principal constituents of CISC. Organic links between the Catholic or Protestant Churches and the Christian labor movement have disappeared altogether or become rather tenuous in various Western countries where the episcopate once held a firm grip on the trade unions. In Holland the diocesan trade unions responsible for the religious, cultural and moral interests of the workers were dissolved in 1964.⁴⁵ In Belgium — where clergymen were deeply

(42) See « Programme de la Confédération Internationale des Syndicat Chrétiens », *La CISC de Amsterdam à Lyon*, pp. 401-403.

(43) See CISC, *Declaration of Principles, Manifesto, Program and Resolutions Adopted by the XVth World Congress of the ICFTU, Liege, 10-13 June 1964* (Courtray, 1964).

(44) *Labor*, nos. 4-5, 1964, pp. 99-100.

(45) « The Catholic Trade Union Movement of the Netherlands Takes on a New Appearance », *Labor*, No. 6, 1964, p. 132.

involved in the past in the affairs of the unions — the Church now considers the CSC to be essentially a socio-economic organization which should be directed and controlled by laymen.⁴⁶ In Canada the previously mentioned Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labor changed its name in 1960 to Confederation of National Trade Unions.⁴⁷ Other significant changes in the title of the national unions of Uruguay and Viet-Nam point up the same tendency toward quick deconfessionalization of the Christian labor movement. Nowhere, however, is this transformation more relevant or has given rise to more polemics than in France where the prestigious Confederation Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens decided in 1963 to modify its program and to substitute the term *Democratic* for *Christian*. Because of the repercussions that such a decision may have in the future, we shall devote some specific comments to that event.

THE FRENCH SCHISM

It should be noted at the outset that the French « cause celebre » was not instigated or fostered by the international but the result of a natural internal evolution within the CFTC. Almost since its appearance in 1920 the CFTC has been divided into two well differentiated groups: a right wing formed by white collar workers and civil servants and a sort of left wing made up of industrial workers, particularly textile and metal workers. While the latter showed little attachment to the Church hierarchy and harbored few hard feelings against the socialists, the former incarnated the traditional conservative position of the Christian labor movement. Until the Second World War the clerical and governmental group constituted the majority and provided the undisputed leadership of the confederation; the collapse of the Vichy regime, however, brought about a steady increase in the strength of the blue collar trade unions. The growth was so pronounced that by 1947 the CFTC minority secured the elimination of all references to the papal social encyclicals from the constitution of the organization. In the following years the internal balance of power continued to shift; gradually the minority was becoming the majority and the movement against the confessional character of the federation approached its climax.

(46) SAMUEL H. BARNES, « Political Culture and Christian Trade Unions », *Relations Industrielles* (Quebec), Vol. 19, No. 3 (March, 1964), p. 361.

(47) See « Chronologie de l'Evolution Confessionnelle de la CTCC (CSN) », *Relations Industrielles*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (January, 1961), p. 102.

By 1960 a committee was set up to study the problem of what title, doctrine and orientation could best fit the future responsibilities of the CFTC. The report of this committee was submitted first in part to the Thirty-Second Congress of the CFTC and then « in totum » to an extraordinary congress convened at the end of 1964. On both occasions heated debates about the nature and the role of the confederation signaled the coming to a head of the clash between the « old trade unionism » and the new industrial unionism. Salaried employees, now allied with the miners, presented to the 1963 congress a motion requesting the committee « to respect the intangible character of the constitutive charter of the movement as spelled out by the constitution in force. »⁴⁸ This proposition was rejected and the voting result forebode the acceptance by the November 1964 congress of the proposed changes, affecting the title, preamble and article first of the constitution.

The adopted amendments to the constitution not only eliminated the word Christian from the title but also introduced some fundamental changes in the character of the confederation. Eligibility requirements were loosened up in order to enable the Confederation « to unite all trade union organizations open to all workers. » The basic goals of the movement underwent a transmutation of character: establishment of a democratic society now replaced the goal of a « Christian society. » Finally, the tactics were also modified whereby the previous procedures gave way to independent economic action not intended to systematically develop class antagonism but to favor « the awareness of the workers to the conditions of their emancipation. »⁴⁹

Equipped with this new outfit the CFTC was clearly expecting to become the great free and democratic national center of France eventually capable of displacing the socialist FO (or merging with it) and challenging the communist predominance. For the time being, however, such drastic changes have entailed some unanticipated results as the dissenting minority decided to break away from the confederation and to set up another national union under the old title, a decision that led to a judicial litigation won in the first instance by the CFDT and in a subsequent appeal by the CFTC but not quite finished yet.⁵⁰

48 *Labor*, Nos. 2-3, 1964, p. 54. See also JOHN F. CRONIN and HARRY F. FLANNER, *The Church and the Workingman* (New York: Hawthorne, 1965), p. 135.

(49) *Labor*, Nos. 2-3, 1964, pp. 57-58.

(50) See *Syndicalisme* (Paris) (July 9, 1966), pp. 7-9.

Such occurrences in the life of perhaps the most influential CISC affiliate are bound to have tremendous repercussions in the future of the Christian International. In the first place there is the problem of recognition prompted by the fact that the traditionalist CFTC has applied for membership and its delegates are already attending the meetings of the General Council as « observers. » Up to now CISC has carefully avoided passing on this critical issue, but it is obvious that a decision implying a fundamental choice of policy cannot be postponed much longer.⁵¹ It goes without saying that whatever the decision may be one of the two contenders is going to feel aggrieved and so also will feel their respective advocates at the various levels of the international. In the second place, it seems plain that even beyond those immediate repercussions, the French disagreement between Christians and seculars may affect the internal cohesion of the federation. Thus far CISC has prided itself on its ideological uniformity and on the homogeneous condition of its membership. Now, a possible reverberation of the French debate may destroy those long standing characteristics.

Leaving aside, however, those long run effects there is no doubt that for the present the trend toward secularization has shown a considerable strengthening. At first glance it may even appear that this renewed emphasis on nonconfessional trade unionism may lead to other completely different international reactions. If on the one hand, CISC and its national components are becoming more secular and more ideologically neutral and; if on the other hand, ICFTU appears nowadays to be less militant in its socialist inclinations and less anticlerical, then, a possible coming together of the two internationals seems in order. This initial impression might be buttressed by the attitude shown by the CFDT favoring closer collaboration with other organizations and particularly with the International Trade Secretariats. To find out the real possibilities for the integration of an all-embracing anti-communist international, we must proceed now to a brief analysis of the relationship between CISC and the other internationals.

(51) The Executive Committee heard in November 1964 a report by the President of the CFDT and decided that the French development was a domestic affair and that possible repercussions on the international level ought to be examined later. The General Council was supposed to discuss the problem in October 1965 but the meeting was postponed « sine die ». Thus it is new up to the 1967 Congress to debate or sidestep the question. See CHARLES BORREL, « L'ambizione del sindacalismo cristiano », *Critica Sociale*, (Milan) (May 1, 1966), p. 28.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER INTERNATIONALS

Several factors have influenced the attitude of CISC vis à vis its counterparts. Ideological differences, the determination to preserve its identity, an awareness of its small size and a history of frustrations have contributed to shape and condition the policies of CISC with respect to ICFTU and WFTU. Concerning the last element let us bear in mind from the beginning that before 1952 CISC was all too often looked down on or completely ignored by the other internationals. Prior to the Second World War it was common for the Christians to be rebuffed in their appeals for joint action; even the helping hand that they extended during the British general strike of 1926 was disdainfully disregarded. Quite naturally those incidents developed within the confederation a sensitivity to the issue of collaboration together with an almost pathological eagerness to be recognized and treated as an equal.

When the arrangements for a World Labor Conference were being made in 1945, a statement issued by Serrarens reflected eloquently those memories of fear and inferiority: « If they want our collaboration we shall accept it on the basis of an honorable arrangement founded on equal considerations and not deemed as a favor.⁵² As it turned out the promoters of the new international were not really concerned about having CISC included in the new structure. Either because they were more interested in attracting some specific national centers or because they thought that the Christian international was nearing total disintegration, the fact is that CISC was not invited to the London Preliminary Conference,⁵³ while the French CFTC, the Belgian CSC, the Dutch Catholic Confederation and the Swiss Protestant federation received formal invitations. It was due to the efforts of the French and Belgian delegates that the Conference resolved to include one delegate of CISC in the interim committee of the Conference, although without vote and in an advisory capacity. Thus, the aspirations of CISC of taking « an eminent and active part » in the making of the World Federation were only minimally met, a circumstance that probably incensed the leaders and prompted the resolution adopted by CISC in August 1945 advising its national centers not to take part in the coming conference and to send only observers.⁵⁴

(52) LEFRANC, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

(53) The official excuse was that the headquarters of the Secretariat were still in the German occupied zone.

(54) CISC, *Rapport Moral*, p. 56.

At the Paris Conference the question of separate identity for confessional organizations was raised by Gaston Tessier. When the Conference rejected his views the Christian delegates decided to continue participating in the Conference but not in the formal Congress of WFTU. Ideology played only a small role in these developments though CISC was to take pride later on in its foresightedness regarding the incompatibility between free and subjugated labor unions.⁵⁵ However, as the WFTU became in the following years an instrument of Soviet policy, the doctrinal question increasingly acquired greater importance.

Hence, when in 1949 the anticommunist trade union centers decided to secede from the WFTU and to establish a separate international made up of free trade unions, a new vista opened for the Christian International. Once again Christian delegates attended the two-staged founding meetings of a world confederation. Yet at the Geneva Preparatory Conference they were allowed to remain only after the Conference overruled the strong objections of the delegates of the rival national centers of France, Belgium and Holland.⁵⁶ A few months later the same objections led to the exclusion of CISC from the list of organizations invited to the formation of ICFTU and to the sending of invitations only to those Christian trade unions which were not vetoed by the national trade union centers with whom international contacts were normally maintained.⁵⁷ On this occasion, however, the Christian labor movement found an unexpected advocate in the person of the American delegates, evidently anxious to form an all embracing organization of free and anticommunist unions and in securing through the presence of the Christians an insurance against socialist predominance.⁵⁸ But the compromise hammered out in the London Conference was not followed by the joining of any Christian organization to the ICFTU. The resentment caused by the alleged discriminations suffered, plus the realization of the « material, ideological and historical disadvantages implicit in the affiliation, »⁵⁹ led the General Council to turn down the question of affiliation.

(55) *Report of the World Trade Union Conference Congress*, p. 165.

(56) See LORWIN, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

(57) ICFTU, *Official Report of the Free World Labor Conference* (Brussels: Weissenbrach, n.d.), p. 17.

(58) WINDMULLER, *American Labor*, p. 161.

(59) CISC, *Le droit de cogestion*, p. 111.

For the next four years the interaction of the factors cited above was to determine the ebbs and flows of the relationship between the two internationals. By 1953 Lorwin asserted that the rivalry between the two internationals was of minor importance and was giving way to cooperation. Thirteen years later, however, that cooperation had only crystallized in a few instances⁶⁰ and in point of fact the rivalry is still very much alive. What other factors have contributed to that lingering state of affairs?

There is above all a mutual misunderstanding stemming from the historical factors already mentioned and more basically emanating from different conceptions of what trade union unity means. For the ICFTU unity means organic unity; for the CISC it means functional unity, and it is plain that both organizations have good reasons for upholding their own interpretations of unity. ICFTU would obviously welcome the incorporation of the Christian labor movement of various European countries where its present affiliates are weaker than those of the WFTU and would also like to expand its membership with the addition of a few more millions. Conversely, CISC's leadership sees no point in being swallowed up by the other international and quite naturally looks to unity of action as a convenient way of enhancing its own prestige. Hence, the numerous proposals made by the Executive Committee of CISC in April 1949, April 1950, November 1951 and November 1952 to establish closer cooperation with the ICFTU and the rejection of those proposals by the latter.

With the advent of the new leadership the CISC approach changed significantly. Vanistendael and his associates probably figured out that as long as CISC remained stagnant ICFTU was likely to continue cold-shouldering its suggestions. Therefore, growth of the organization was deemed necessary to defend it and to convince the ICFTU of the need for closer collaboration. To be sure proposals for cooperation continued to be issued in 1957 and 1959 but the tone was now different since the efforts were directed toward the enlargement of the federation by its own activity.

By 1960 the new approach seemed to pay off and the creation of a liaison committee was for the first time considered, but the resignation

(60) Both organizations supported the Marshall Plan, jointly participated in the Schuman Plan and later on in the Council of Europe. Co-operation in the ILO has been marred by frequent complaints of CISC about the distribution of positions in the Governing Body.

of Oldenbroek as General Secretary of the ICFTU suspended the negotiations. Further contacts between the two confederations resulted in December 1960 in a joint statement on Spain and during the next two years some specific instances of cooperation did take place particularly at the level of African trade unionism. It seemed now that at long last the idea of functional unity was making headway, perhaps as a prelude to an organic unity. As it happened, however, the internal transformation of CISC was increasingly manifesting its strength in the international field in a way not conducive to a rapprochement with the ICFTU.

During the 50's the Christian International had sought, in effect, to appear less systematic in its attacks on communism and more amenable to some degree of communication with the countries behind the Iron Curtain. It is true that Christians representatives objected again in 1954 to the admission of the Soviet worker's delegate in the ILO⁶¹ but the tone of the objection was not too strong and more significantly, it was shortly followed by a statement of CISC regarding as « debatable and regrettable » the eviction of the WFTU headquarters from Paris.⁶² Moreover an initial step leading to peaceful coexistence between CISC and WFTU was taken a few years later when the two organizations decided to proceed to an exchange of publications. Certainly no overt variation in the official rejection of Marxist principles has occurred but it is fair to assume that as a part of the new image, CISC has decided to abandon its prior aloofness toward communist trade unions. This impression is corroborated first by the frequent criticisms that one is able to find in the Christian publications about the « sterile and negative attitude taken by the ICFTU and American labor toward communism »⁶³ and second by the stated disengagement of the Christian International from the great powers of the East and the West.

Clearly this softening of the anticommunist stand tended to engender some irritation in the leadership of the ICFTU and to give rise to new tensions capable of keeping both organizations apart from each other. It was, however, with respect to the activities of the Latin American regional organization of CISC that the irritation turned into exasperation and the tensions had grown into a crisis.

(61) See CISC, *Le plein emploi*, p. 299.

(62) See LEFRANC, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

(63) See, for instance, *Labor*, No. 4, 1964, p. 75 and *SOCI*, Vol. I, No. 15 (August 1966), p. 2.

CLASC v. ORIT: THE RADICALIZATION OF THE CHRISTIAN INTERNATIONAL

For the last five years an embittered rivalry between ICFTU's and CISC's offshoots in Latin America has enlivened the labor scene of the Western Hemisphere, temporarily relegating to the sidelines the old antagonism of communists and anticommunists. For the purpose of this paper it is not necessary to review the list of mutual recriminations⁶⁴ and to ascertain the truth or falsity of them; most probably there has been considerable exaggeration and prejudice in many of those charges, particularly in regard to those aimed at branding CLASC with the label of crypto-communist. What is beyond any doubt however is the fact that CLASC has passionately espoused the cause of social revolution in Latin America and that in doing so it has used tactics and applied procedures abhorred by the advocates of « bread and butter » unionism. In the words of its Secretary General, Emilio Máspero, CLASC's objective is « to organize the working class in decisive manner as an instrument for effecting social revolution. »⁶⁵ It is not clear what kind of social revolution will be pursued but according to some spokesmen of the Christian movement the ultimate goal is the abolition of the wage system and the establishment of the « communitarian society, » i.e., a type of structure where property will be owned in common rather than individually and the profit motive will be replaced by the cooperative one.⁶⁶

One needs only glance at the publications of CLASC to realize how this goal is pursued through continuous references to the « rapid, radical and total transformation of the present economic structures, »⁶⁷ to the « irreversible and necessary revolution »⁶⁸ and to the battle against free enterprise « one of the most formidable forces opposing the betterment of Latin American labours. »⁶⁹ For all practical purposes it is plain that the Christian organization has decided to do away with the defensive

(64) For a review of ORIT's charges against CLASC, see GLADYS DELMAS, « Latin Labor's Alarming Christians », *The Reporter* (February 1965), pp. 27-30 and JESSE FRIEDMAN, « CLASC Unmasked », *Free Trade Union News*, Vol. 21, No. 10 (October 1966), pp. 3 and 7. An attack to ORIT can be found in EMILIO MASPERO, « American Latina Hora Cero » *Reconstrucion* (Medellin), Vol. 11, No. 1 (January 1963), pp. 13-18.

(65) EMILIO MASPERO, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

(66) See SILNEY LENS, « Rise of the Social Christians-Latin Left », *Commonweal*, (October 14, 1966), p. 54.

(67) *Labor*, No. 6, 1965, p. 237.

(68) *Labor*, No. 1, 1963, p. 32.

(69) *Reconstrucion*, Ano 1, No. 2, July 1962, pp. 1-2.

and circumspect attitude that hitherto has characterized the free labor movement and is determined to put an end to the monopoly of social reform thus far enjoyed by the communist propaganda.

It is also unquestionable, however, that in following that policy CLASC has been using much of the language, the dialectic and the approach typical of the Marxist's movements. Looking again at its official publications it is possible to find there the standard litany of anti-U.S. slogans. To cite just two examples: the Alliance for Progress is viewed as an abused scheme designed to preserve worn out structures and to create a new type of colonialism;⁷⁰ the U. S. intervention in the Dominican Republic is labeled as « criminal and stupid. »⁷¹

Moreover, CLASC's program of social revolution has led to the establishment of various national labor movements similarly inspired in the principles of profound and quick social change. The Dominican Confederation of Christian Unions (CASC) for instance, has been characterized as « socialist, revolutionary, anti-imperialist, non-sectarian and non-partisan. »⁷² In traditionally conservative Colombia the Christian organization (ASA) not only decries the soft line of other federations « sold out to capitalism » but recently paid a tribute of understanding to Father Camilo Torres upon his death fighting with the guerrillas.⁷³

Thus the clash between the « secular » free labor movement and the « Christian » free labor movement⁷⁴ takes place both at the international and at the national level. This confrontation reached a climax in May 1965 when the expulsion of CLASC from the OAS Trade Union Advisory Committee (COSATE) was proposed on grounds that it was incompatible with the democratic interamerican labor movement. The expulsion did not materialize, however, since the representative of CLASC had decided the day before to withdraw from the Committee.

In appraising the foregoing developments some observers of Latin American affairs have pondered over the dimensions of the dispute and

(70) *Labor*, Nos. 3-4, 1965, p. 137.

(71) CLASC, *The Dominican Crisis as Seen by CLASC* (Santiago de Chile, 1965), p. 1.

(72) HOWARD J. WIARDA, « The Development of the Labor Movement in the Dominican Republic », *Inter-American Economic Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 1, (Summer 1966), p. 51.

(73) *Labor*, No. 2, 1966, p. 77.

(74) The distinction is not entirely accurate in reality inasmuch as some of the most Church-inspired labor movements of Latin America, like the Colombian UTC are not affiliated with CLASC but with ORIT.

suggested that CLASC's disruptive and revolutionary position in Latin America differs so radically from its European parents that it has become a major mystery.⁷⁵ A close analyses of CLASC's stand and relations with CISC reveals, however, that this attitude of the regional organization is endorsed by the CISC leadership and responds to the same phenomenon of transformation currently in full swing in the Christian International. The confusion probably stems from the circumstance that no clear differentiation has been made between the local factors contributing to aggravate the feud and the factors which brought into being the opposition in the first place. Among the former one must include the following two.

First, on the part of ORIT there is a widely held conviction — carried over from the days of the Monroe Doctrine of Labor — that Latin American ought to be considered as natural territory for the American labor movement and hence that European based internationals should stay away from that region. The fact that the Christian International dared to form a regional organization in that area and — more important that such an « intruder » is making inroads in the ORIT controlled labor movement is obviously seen as a major affront to the established patterns. Furthermore, the different composition of the two organizations contribute to give prominence in this situation to the long standing conflict between the « interamerican » and the « latin american » type of international trade unionism.

Second, on the part of CLASC there is in turn something of the same inferiority complex which is ingrained in the behavior of the parent organization. A perusal of its publications promptly reveals in effect, how impassioned are the complaints of its leadership about discrimination and unfair treatment by the U. S. Government and the American labor movement. Those complaints are primarily related to the Alliance for Progress and to the AID economic aid, the administration of which — according to the Christians — has completely bypassed or ignored the existence of CLASC.⁷⁶

(75) See DELMAS, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

(76) Two examples will suffice to document this assertion: 1. According to an editorial written by Vanistendael: « The Alliance for Progress, the AIFLD, the U.S. Government and last but not least the AFL-CIO should apply the nondiscriminatory policy they are so proud of in the U.S.A. to all really democratic and progressive groups in Latin America even if they belong to other international organizations » (*Labor*, No. 1, 1963, p. 7); 2. The repudiation of the Alliance for Progress by the Fourth Congress of CLASC was based on the grounds that the Punta del Este Charter had been violated by the U.S. and CLASC discriminated in favor of ORIT (*Noticiero Obrero Latinoamericano*), No. 17 (February 1963) p. 1.

Nobody can deny that those factors have greatly acerbated the dispute, but it is no less certain that the ultimate reason for the antagonism must be found in the contrasting attitudes of the two organizations. From the institutional standpoint, the growing radicalization of CLASC led to an inevitable conflict between reform and revolution, between business unionism and social «movementism», between the «bread and butter» ideology and the philosophy of moral struggle. Those different attitudes are reflected in the behavior of the respective labor elites: ORIT's leadership is as militantly anticommunist, as pragmatic and prudent in its approach to labor problems; CLASC's on the contrary does not show much antipathy for the communists,⁷⁷ looks very quixotic in its endeavors and appears more often than not as the vociferous and aggressive leadership of a political movement.

That all those signs of radicalization of CLASC should not be viewed as an isolated or independent phenomenon within CISC is easy to demonstrate. Not only the representative sent from Brussels to head the regional office that preceded CLASC was expelled as an agitator from several Latin American countries⁷⁸ and a personal envoy of the Executive Bureau served later on as technical advisor during the forming years of the regional, but some contemporary indications eloquently point up the intimate connection between the regional and the global international. Let us not forget that none of the resolutions of CLASC have ever been rejected by the federation and quite to the contrary on the occasion of the Eighteenth Council of the Latin American regional, CISC explicitly restated its solidarity with its regional.⁷⁹ Moreover, high ranking officials of the parent organization usually attend the meetings of CLASC, *Labor's* editorials and reports enthusiastically support the most extreme stands of the regional, and present-day leaders of CLASC have been promoted to positions in the Executive Bureau of the international. Finally, CLASC's activities are not only financed by the Conrad Adenauer Foundation and by the German bishops' charity fund but primarily by the grants allocated to it by the CISC Solidarity Fund.

In the light of these circumstances it is safe to conclude that CLASC's endeavors are not the exploits of a rebel child but the accepted and

(77) «We are not anticommunists, but merely anticommunism» (J. GOLDSACK, «Latin American, Continent of the Future», *Labor*, Nos. 5-6, 1963, p. 182.)

(78) CISC, *Le plein emploi*, p. 165. It should be noted, however, that CISC's leadership has consistently denied the veracity of those charges.

(79) «Eighth Council of the Latin American Federation of Christian Trade Unions (CLASC)», *Labor*, No. 1, 1963, p. 33.

encouraged activities of a member in good standing of the organization. True those activities and procedures differ substantially from the procedures employed by the European national centers of the Christian labor movement, but we are dealing here with the international federation and in this respect it seems pretty clear that the radicalism of CLASC is just another expression of a long range program adopted by CISC leadership. A brief look at the latest manifestations of that program will further substantiate our conclusions.

THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALISTS

As it was originally drafted and remained in force with minor amendments until 1964, the Program of CISC was undoubtedly a rather conservative one. The ultimate goal of the federation was described as the « deproletarianization » of the working class which end was to be accomplished through the expansion of private property and the gradual bringing about of economic and social reforms. The possible use of strikes and other means of direct action was not even mentioned in the program in keeping with the traditional resistance of the Christians to challenge the legal authorities.

The Fifteenth Congress endeavored to revise that program and adopt it to the new orientation. The aim of the federation was now conceived as « the replacement of the existing economic systems » and the procedures to be used to that effect were not confined to « progressive reforms » but included the « process of peaceful revolution. »⁸⁰ Where in the past the formulation of the principle of collaboration entailed a specific reference to owners of capital, employers and managers, now the Program alluded in more vague terms to an authentic work community based on the loyal cooperation of all partners and placed in the pursuit of the common good.⁸¹ Class struggle was not accepted as a « systematic way » of bringing about the necessary changes, but class collaboration — the former cornerstone of the Christian doctrine — was reduced to a minimum; furthermore, the Program now stated in clear terms that CISC will not accept anything less than the free and full exercise of the right to strike.⁸² Finally, the instrument of nationalization formerly regarded as incompatible with the Christian

(80) CISC, *Declaration of Principles*, p. 14.

(81) *Ibid.*, p. 15.

(82) *Ibid.*, p. 5.

principle of subsidiarity was now explicitly accepted « whenever it is required. »⁸³

Whatever doubts could remain about the magnitude of the turn to the left were subsequently dispelled by the self-styled characterization of CISC's leaders as Christian socialists. References to Christian socialism began to appear in the publications of the international and in the speeches of its leaders⁸⁴ alongside with the acceptance of some of the principles of socialism. Such occurrences might have been considered outrageous or heretical by a traditional Catholic for only a few years before the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* had warned that « no one can at the same time be a sincere Catholic and a true socialist. »⁸⁵ In 1931 the expression « Christian socialism » represented according to Pope Pius XI a contradiction in terms.⁸⁶ Now the highest officers of the once dubbed faithful servant of the Vatican had the temerity of calling themselves Christian socialists. Yet it was even more staggering that as a matter of fact they were doing such things without running the risk of being excommunicated and on the contrary continuing to receive the papal blessings. That this seemingly impossible happening had taken place was basically the result of the impact of Pope John XXIII and of the accelerated process of modernization that is still in motion in the Catholic Church. To the extent that this process opened the doors to the most radical ideas and made more flexible the official stand of the Church, it certainly exerted a decisive influence in the transformation of CISC. Catholic reformers and union leaders were not only relieved of possible condemnation because of the adoption of revolutionary postures, but they were actually encouraged to do so by the former stronghold of conservatism. It seems proper in view of these events to conclude this paper with a short analysis of the changes undergone in the social thought of Catholicism, still the most influential force within CISC.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE SPIRIT OF MODERNIZATION

It is widely known that the throes of modernization of the Catholic religion have shocked both the ecclesiastical and the temporal domains

(83) *Ibid.*, p. 5.

(84) « For those who like myself have been brought up on the one hand in the Marxist tradition and on the other hand according to the principles of Christian socialism . . . » (A. VANISTENDAFL, « Israel, a Laboratory of Interesting Social Experiments », *Labor*, No. 5, 1965, p. 171.)

(85) *Seven Great Encyclicals* (Glen Rock, New Jersey, 1963), p. 158.

(86) *Ibid.*

of the Church. Regarding the latter three stages can be identified in the evolution of the social teachings of the Catholic thought. From 1832 to 1891 the papal encyclicals related to the social question condemned modernism (*Mirari Vos*) and took a negative view toward innovation and socialism (*Quod Apostolici Muneris*). During the second stage represented by *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, the Church sponsored mild reforms and sought to prove that its doctrines were not an obstacle to social change. Finally, the period of *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris* tends to turn the Church into an instrument of modernization raising development and social action to the status of integral parts of the Christian teachings. For our purpose it is the contrast between the second and third stage what might shed more light in the transformation of CISC.

From 1891 to the World War II the Catholic thought concerning the social question was very defensive and traditionalist. The official position of the Church was predicated on the rejection of both capitalism and socialism, though the repulsion of the latter was always stronger. Forced to present to the world a third alternative the Church looked back to the peaceful world of the medieval guilds and suggested a new corporative system for the industrial society. Class collaboration instead of class struggle or class exploration became the basic theme of the Catholic ideology. In the field of trade unionism this principle led to the sponsorship of associations « consisting either of workmen alone or of workmen and employers together » but in either case formed by Christians who gave « special and principal attention to piety and morality. »⁸⁷ Concerning property relations, the Church rejected the notion of the « community of goods » and assumed the defense of the « sacred and inviolable right of private ownership open to as many people as possible. »⁸⁸ As to the part that the state should play in the organization of the civil society, the Church developed the principle of subsidiarity according to which the state should not withdraw from individuals or local governments and commit to the central authority what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry. Finally, it is worth noting that the whole approach was permeated by the conviction that inequalities are inherent in the human society and cannot be eradicated by government fiat.

(87) *Seven Great Encyclicals*, pp. 25-27.

(88) *Ibid.*, p. 22.

All this modest and precautionary approach began to be revised during World War II⁸⁹ and underwent a change during the brief pontificate of Pope John XXIII. On the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, his first mayor encyclical *Mater et Magistra* presented a much more dynamic and advanced program of social change. To be sure no open reversal of past formulations can be found throughout the whole text but a new lively spirit is clearly displayed. Thus, the right of private property is still defended, but the sections devoted to the effective distribution of private property, to the social function of property and to public property far outnumber these dedicated to the confirmation of the right of private ownership.⁹⁰ Alongside those provisions there are some unprecedented ideas like the proposition that the desires of employees to be partners in enterprises in which they work are justified or the statement that it is of the utmost importance that productive enterprises assume the character of true human fellowship.⁹¹ The principle of subsidiarity is now honored in the breach since to meet the problems stemming from the new historical conditions the Pope actually proposes a new balance in institutions between the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of socialization.⁹² The fatalistic conception of inequalities is gone and in its stead there is a stronger faith in the possibility of human progress. Thus, the age-long conception of poverty as a virtue is replaced by a most vigorous war on poverty. Lastly, genuine trade unions are specifically acknowledged with the significant change that the praise of the Church goes now to those who work in Christian associations of workers as well as to those « who give their special attention to other labor associations that follow the law of nature and respect the religious and moral liberty of individuals. »⁹³

But *Mater et Magistra* is important not only for what it says but also for what it does not say. For the first time since *Quod Apostolici Muneris* (1878) here is a social encyclical which keeps silent in the matter of socialism. This significant fact coupled with the indiscriminate appeal to understanding made to all men in *Pacem Terris*, clearly portended the Italian « apertura a sinistra » and the German « grand

(89) Particularly since the Pentecost, 1941 Broadcast and the Christmas 1942 Message both of Pope Pius XII. See JOHN F. CRONIN, *Christianity and Social Progress*, (Baltimore : Helicon, 1965), pp. 13 and 72.

(90) See *ibid.*, pp. 66-71.

(91) *Seven Great Encyclicals*, p. 238.

(92) LESLIE FISHMAN, « *Mater et Magistra* », *Western Economic Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Fall 1962), p. 60.

(93) *Seven Great Encyclicals*, p. 240.

coalition » between Christian Democrats and Socialists. Not to be brushed aside also is the fact that the principle of collaboration deserves only a passing reference thus giving way to the formulation of other more radical solutions.

« The process that was initiated by Leo XIII and which found a new elan in the neo-Thomistic contribution of Jacques Maritain, has reached now its climax under Paul VI with the creation of the Secretariat for Justice and Peace and the publication of the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. This latter document stands out not only as an appeal for social development but also as an attempt to conciliate Christianity with certain aspects of socialism. One needs only contrast the blistering attack againsts liberal capitalism contained in paragraph 26 with the emphasis placed on communal responsibility, planning, expropriation and « bold transformation of society. » True, the pope reiterates that Christians cannot admit a materialistic and atheistic philosophy, but « provided that the religious orientation of life and human freedom are safeguarded », the encyclical proclaims quite explicitly that « a pluralism of professional organizations and trade unions is admissible. » (paragraph 31)

Such dramatic developments inside the Catholic Church were inevitably going to have a bearing in the world of Christianity outside the Church. Liberal and aggressive union leaders of CISC found henceforth no difficulty in reconciling their Catholic feelings with the acceptance of certain tenets of socialism. As a matter of fact it is possible to say that the turn to the left of CISC and the radicalization of CLASC are nothing more than labor counterparts of *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*. For insofar as Catholicism remains the principal force of the Christian International it is logical to expect that the changes in the position of the Church affect the course of the Christian labor movement. CISC was conservative at a time when the Church was merely interested in proving that it was not an obstacle to social change; now that it is becoming an instrument of social change it is only natural to see how the spirit of « *aggiornamento* » helps to produce a more liberal and progressive CISC.

Conclusions

It can hardly be doubted that the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions has undergone a profound transformation. Not only has it ceased to be an exclusively European movement, but is

rapidly growing secular and it is also becoming a radical or revolutionary type of trade unionism. As one looks back over those developments it appears evident, in effect, that the dechristianization of the Asian and African organizations and the radicalism of the Latin American regional derive from the new orientation of the international and that the latter in turn was made possible by the changes experienced in the position of the Church. For those who may think that the new orientation of CISC goes far beyond the changes occurring in the Church, we shall merely recall that it is characteristic of the labor movement to magnify the influences originated in more conservative quarters.

The roots of those changes may be traced back, therefore, to the corresponding evolution of the Catholic Church and, to a lesser extent, to the liberalizing currents of the Protestant faith. But, however respectable the origin may be, such drastic changes also involve some serious risks. Among the many predictions that could be made concerning those risks and the future of CISC perhaps the most provocative are the following ones :

1. The bid toward universalization has certainly expanded the horizons of CISC but it may also take place at the expense of the orthodox conception of what an international trade union means. In seeking to attract the impoverished masses of underdeveloped countries, CISC is in effect promoting the establishment of social movements or political action groups, rather than labor organizations. It is no hap- penstance that the name CLASC alludes to an aggregation of trade unionists rather than trade unions and that the same type of denomi- nation is found in other Asian and African organizations where Christian peasant circles and youth associations exist alongside the trade unions.

Possibly this phenomenon has been motivated not only by the urge to grow as quickly as possible but also by the fact that the more devel- oped sectors of those emerging nations are already organized by other groups. But whatever the reasons the danger of a deviation of the original idea of a labor movement is clearly present.

2. In abandoning the name and the social principles of Christianity, CISC is no doubt opening the door to the non-Christian masses of African and Asian countries but it may also set the stage for a crisis within the European organizations which up to now have represented the real basis of the international. The possibilities for a major division are indeed too obvious to be dismissed or slightly treated. It is not only

that the French schism might become contagious if similar events occur in other countries but also that the trend toward universalization and secularization may lead to a major confrontation within the international itself. For if Vanistendael continues expanding the international in a non-Christian and radical direction, then it may happen that the confessional and reformist trade unions of Belgium, Holland and other European countries decide to cease financing the nonconfessional and radical organizations of other continents. A clash between leadership and financial supporters could in those conditions imply either a halt of the present trend or a substantial revision of the policies followed or a formal split.

If any one of the two possible splits over occur, then the forecast must of necessity be a gloomy one. The traditional group will surely retreat to the European context and will try to resume the modest life of the past, while the radicals lacking the necessary support will drift away and probably wind up in another international. For the former there is moreover the foreseeable disadvantage that perhaps the days of pure confessional trade unions are gone. No doubt there were historical reasons to explain the rise of a Christian labor movement in the past as a defensive reaction against the strong anticlericalism of the socialists. Yet once those circumstances disappear it seems that the rationale for a separate organization made up of members of a given faith is at best a questionable one.

3. Lastly the turn to the left in connection with the abandonment of the Christian doctrine may invigorate for a while the external activities of the movement but it may also entail some long run unfavorable effects. On the one hand it is likely that the loss of the rallying point of the Christian doctrine affects the cohesion of the movement. On the other hand, it may even bring about the loss of CISC's identity. It is true that CISC is still claiming that its stand will not change in regard to the rejection of both capitalism and communism. Yet it is not enough to reject the other major doctrines; it is necessary to come on with a positive, comprehensive and appealing ideology. Up to now CISC has relied on the papal encyclicals and in the humanistic and moral doctrine that sprang up from them. If the religious links are definitely severed and the tradition of Christian humanism is set aside, it is clear that CISC will be forced to look for a new doctrine.

It is precisely because of that urge to fill the impending void that CISC has been unconsciously absorbing some of the old spirit of social

democracy. Or perhaps its leadership is deliberately moving in that direction in the hope of procuring for CISC the role of democratic socialism that the increasing moderation of ICFTU and the dogmatic communism of WFTU left vacant. At any rate it seems appropriate to predict in this respect that if in the past the stock in trade of CISC was the third path through the social encyclicals and moral christianity, in the future it will probably be the third path through a sort of ethical or spiritual socialism.

Post script : After completion of this article it was learned that Mr. Vanistendael tendered his resignation effective September 1st 1967. It is too soon to ascertain whether such resignation was the outcome of an internal crisis or prompted by Vanistendael's sincere desire to collaborate with the work of the Secretariat for Justice and Peace. At any rate, it seems safe to predict that the departure of Vanistendael will signal the beginning of a new stage in the life of CISC.

LA CONFEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES SYNDICATS CHRETIENS: SON EVOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

Dans le domaine du syndicalisme international, l'étude de la CISC présente aujourd'hui un intérêt manifeste. Autrefois, partie négligeable devant les autres centrales internationales (telles la CISL¹ et la FSM²), la CISC attire de plus en plus une attention marquée.

Un intéressant phénomène de transformation de l'intérieur durant la dernière décade a pu amener une croissance accélérée dans le « membership » et dans les moyens financiers. Les facteurs de ce changement dans le caractère et l'orientation de la CISC sont nombreux. Nommons entre autres : le besoin d'attirer des membres dans les pays sous-développés, le processus de sécularisation, l'esprit « d'aggiornamento » introduit par le Pape Jean XXIII dans l'Eglise catholique et la venue au pouvoir dans la centrale d'un « leadership » ambitieux et énergique.

HISTORIQUE

Les premiers syndicats catholiques et protestants qui ont été formés se présentaient comme une alternative à l'approche anticléricale des organisations socialistes et anarchiques. Ceux qui participaient à la formation de ces premiers syndi-

(1) CISL, Confédération Internationale des Syndicats Libres.

(2) FSM, Fédération Syndicale Mondiale.

cats, tout motivés d'abord par l'urgence de répandre la doctrine chrétienne et de réagir à l'influence socialiste, n'entretenaient que de vagues notions au sujet de la réforme du système capitaliste et de la protection des intérêts des travailleurs.

Même si les syndicats chrétiens connurent d'abord une légère expansion, leur importance et leur influence n'en demeuraient pas moins assez marginales. C'était plutôt, selon les mots d'un membre : « une organisation composée d'un petit nombre de faibles éléments et destinée à une vie précaire ».

De 1920 à 1945

La période expérimentale du mouvement des travailleurs chrétiens se termina par la fondation de la CISC en 1920, sans toutefois mettre un terme à ses faiblesses internes et à ses antagonismes. La venue de régimes autoritaristes en Italie, Allemagne et Autriche amena de coûteuses pertes dans le « membership » de l'organisation. Malgré ses handicaps (et quelques autres), le mouvement n'en continua pas moins d'exister et d'évoluer.

Pendant la période d'entre deux guerres, l'organisation était plutôt décrite comme « l'internationale blanche », rattachée à la doctrine chrétienne en tant que base à la société humaine.

De 1945 à 1952

La deuxième guerre mondiale interrompit pratiquement toutes les activités de la CISC pour plusieurs années. La reconstruction du mouvement ouvrier chrétien dans le pays où le fascisme et le nazisme l'avaient détruit fut la tâche première de la confédération pendant plusieurs années. Ses efforts ne rencontrèrent que peu de succès. L'expansion des fédérations nationales existantes s'avéra toutefois plus profitable. La reconstruction de la CISC prit donc place dans le même milieu européen (France et Belgique) qui la caractérisait avant la guerre.

Le point tournant

Après le départ de Serrarens en 1952, qui fut secrétaire général pendant 32 ans, l'organisation connut une profonde transformation pour prendre l'allure d'un mouvement vraiment international non confessionnel et susceptible d'attirer les pays sous-développés par des slogans révolutionnaires et socialistes. En 1955, lors du XII^e congrès, même si les éléments européens continuèrent de miner, on pouvait raisonnablement escompter que la voie des autres continents devienne de plus en plus forte dans le futur. Finalement, l'élection de Vanistendael et de ses associés signifia la montée au pouvoir d'une nouvelle génération moins identifiée avec les luttes chrétiennes contre le socialisme, plus susceptible d'accepter quelques-uns des postulats du socialisme et définitivement imprégnée d'une vision universelle de ses fonctions. On comprend assez facilement que ce facteur combiné au processus de sécularisation, à la montée des pays sous-développés et à la modernisation de l'Eglise catholique puisse mener à la naissance d'un nouvel esprit et d'une nouvelle approche.

SITUATION ACTUELLE

Les congrès, autorité suprême de la CISC en matière d'élaboration des politiques, se tiennent au moins une fois à tous les trois ans et sont composés des fédérations nationales et des syndicats internationaux. Second dans la hiérarchie, *le conseil général* peut ressembler à un congrès en miniature dans lequel le nombre des représentants est réduit pendant que le nombre des rencontres est augmenté. A son tour, *le bureau* est peut-être le plus important organisme de la CISC puisqu'il s'occupe des questions quotidiennes et qu'il est autorisé, de par la constitution, à traiter de tout sujet non spécifiquement assigné à d'autres organismes. Les *organisations régionales* et les *comités* sont des organismes à compétence limitée.

Au point de vue « membership », la CISC dit représenter environ 12 millions de travailleurs (membres en règle et sympathisant). Quant au nombre de membres en règle, un tableau statistique, publié en 1963 par le Ministère du Travail Américain, estimait le « membership » de la CISC à 3.6 millions.

Il est assez difficile d'analyser les aspects financiers de l'organisation. On sait cependant qu'il existe d'abord un fond de solidarité constitué des contributions des pays industrialisés, sur une base d'un franc belge par tête. Il y a en plus, évidemment, le fond général correspondant au budget ordinaire de l'institution et composé des contributions des organisations affiliées. Si durant ces 47 années d'existence, la CISC n'a élu que deux secrétaires généraux et 7 présidents, c'est qu'elle n'a pas échappé aux caractéristiques et aux problèmes qui sont habituellement le lot de semblables organisations. Le phénomène a même pu être accentué dans son cas à cause des sources limitées de recrutement disponible.

Cependant les dirigeants de la CISC ont su prouver qu'il représentaient plus qu'une simple bureaucratie internationale. Vanistendael et ses associés ont élargi les horizons de l'organisation de telle façon qu'on peut maintenant élaborer sur les nombreux signes de transformations qui se sont produites.

SIGNES DE CHANGEMENT

L'universalisation

Le XVe congrès tenu à Liège en 1964 donna l'impression nette d'une certaine **tendance vers l'universalisation** et vers l'abandon de la tradition européenne. Les premiers signes de cette tendance à s'étendre dans tous les pays du monde furent notés dans les années 50. Il existe deux raisons fondamentales à l'idée d'universalisation de la CISC :

- 1.—Etant une organisation ouvrière de bonne foi, elle doit tendre à l'universalisation à cause de l'idée internationale du travail.
- 2.—Aussi, vu son inspiration catholique elle doit respecter le caractère d'universalité de cette Eglise.

La sécularisation

La CISC qui fut d'abord confessionnelle pour ensuite devenir inter-confessionnelle finit par adopter une approche non-confessionnelle.

Le schisme français

Dès son apparition en 1920, la CFTC a été divisée en deux groupes opposés : une aile droite formée par les collets blancs et les employés civils ; en second lieu, on nota une espèce d'aile gauche formée par les travailleurs industriels surtout ceux du textile et de la métallurgie. Ces derniers formèrent une minorité à l'intérieur de la CFTC, minorité qui avec les années finit par devenir la majorité accentuant ainsi la bataille interne contre le caractère confessionnel du mouvement. Ceci amena en 1963, l'élimination du mot « chrétien » et l'introduction de changements fondamentaux au caractère de la confédération.

Relation avec les autres mouvements internationaux

On note plusieurs facteurs qui ont influencé l'attitude de la CISC face à ses rivales. Des différences idéologiques, la volonté de garder son identité, la conscience de sa petitesse et une histoire de frustrations ont contribué à établir et à conditionner les politiques de la CISC face à la CISL et la FSM. Historiquement, il y a toujours eu, et ce depuis 1945 une rivalité entre la CISC et les autres organisations internationales : cette rivalité tend cependant à s'atténuer depuis quelques années.

Les socialistes chrétiens

L'évolution des esprits permet à la CISC de considérer comme utiles certains moyens comme la grève et la nationalisation autrefois qualifiées de moyens contraires au principe chrétien.

L'Eglise catholique et l'esprit de modernisation

L'évolution de la pensée de l'Eglise catholique est notable : Les encycliques de 1832 à 1891 condamnèrent les innovations et le socialisme : Les encycliques *Mater et Magistra* et *Pacem in Terris* qui eurent la tendance de transformer l'Eglise en un moyen de modernisation pronaient le développement.

CONCLUSION

On ne peut pas douter de la transformation profonde qui s'est opérée au sein de la CISC. Elle a non seulement cessé d'être exclusivement européenne mais elle est devenue l'image d'un syndicalisme laïque et révolutionnaire. Ces changements prennent racine dans l'évolution de l'Eglise catholique et aussi, dans une moins grande mesure dans les courants libéraux de la foi protestante. Quoique d'origine respectable, ces changements drastiques impliquent des risques sérieux :

- 1.—La tendance vers l'universalisation a sûrement élargi les horizons de la CISC mais elle a pris place aux dépens de la conception orthodoxe de ce que signifie le syndicalisme international.
- 2.—En abandonnant les principes sociaux chrétiens, la CISC ouvre sans crédit ses portes aux masses non-chrétiennes d'Afrique et d'Asie, mais peut créer le théâtre d'une crise à l'intérieur des organisations européennes qui ont jusqu'à maintenant représenté la base réelle de la CISC.
- 3.—L'abandon de la doctrine chrétienne peut fortifier les activités externes du mouvement en courte période, mais les effets de longue période sont à craindre.